



FIVE

The Hartford Courant.
courant.com

CAN'T REBOOT IT?
RECYCLE IT!



Friday, November 12

Site last updated 11/12/99 03:01 AM

FEATURES

- [News @ 3 p.m.](#)
- [AP State News](#)
- [World/National](#)
- [7 Days of News](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Technology/Enter](#)
- [Projects](#)
- [Lottery](#)
- [Movies](#)
- [Restaurants](#)
- [TV Listings](#)
- [Site Map](#)

CLASSIFIEDS

- [Jobs](#)
- [Autos](#)
- [Homes](#)
- [Auctions](#)
- [Personals](#)

THE SHOPS

- [Visit Our](#)
- [Online Retailers](#)

ABOUT US

- [Subscribe](#)
- [Guestbook](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [Web Staff](#)
- [News Staff](#)
- [FAQs](#)

SEARCH

- [News Library](#)
- [CT Internet](#)
- [Directory](#)
- [The Net](#)

• [Courant.Com](#)

HOME

NEWS SPORTS BUSINESS ENTERTAINMENT VOICES FIVE

**SPECIAL REPORT: Adriaen's
Landing**

Stadium Loss Seen As A Riverfront Gain

By ERIC M. WEISS, MATTHEW DALY And
DAN HAAR

This story ran in the Courant November 12,
1999

The new math of Adriaen's Landing, state officials
acknowledged Thursday, is that subtraction is addition.

That's why no one was complaining when Gov. John G.
Rowland announced plans to punt a UConn football stadium
from Adriaen's Landing to Rentschler Field in East Hartford.

In the final analysis, a domed riverfront stadium that would
be used a dozen or so times a year was not worth its space
in the 33-acre footprint of Adriaen's Landing, Rowland and
legislative leaders said.

If they needed any
convincing, it had come a
day earlier, when
legislators were shown an
artist's rendering of the
Adriaen's Landing site,
with the imposing
stadium.



George David, Chairman of the Board
of United Technologies, explains to
the press how the decision was made
to offer the State of Connecticut a
parcel of 75 acres of land to build the
new UConn stadium on. Behind him
is Gov. John Rowland.

"It was like dropping a
spaceship onto a scenic
New England riverbank,"
said Roy Occhiogrosso, a
spokesman for Senate
Democrats.

An open-air stadium will be built on 75 acres donated by
United Technologies Corp. at Rentschler Field, and
Adriaen's Landing will be retooled for a convention center,
hotel and, probably, a new indoor arena to replace the aging
Civic Center.

Supporters said moving the stadium makes the Adriaen's
Landing site less cramped and more flexible. A fluid layout
and concept are key at a time when Rowland and his
hand-picked developers are crisscrossing the country trying
to interest retailers and other attractions in the project.

And then there's the money. Building a 35,000-seat,
open-air stadium on the flat, cleaner land of Rentschler



RDMS DocID

00100125

Read & Ack. by
CTD 910672081
R.8
RDMS# 100125

Field will shave \$80 million to \$120 million from the project's cost. That means more cash for housing, retail operations, an expanded convention center and a new civic arena at Hartford's riverfront.

Asked why the stadium was now seen as a drag on Adriaen's Landing, rather than a key component - as he had insisted throughout efforts to bring the New England Patriots to Hartford - Rowland said simply that things change.

Specifically, he said, he was persuaded by the developers of the project that the domed stadium was too big and would "do violence" to the riverfront site.

Even city officials agreed.

"It's a good move," Hartford Deputy Mayor Frances Sanchez said. "We saw that it was too cramped, too packed. I don't think Hartford is losing. We have to think regionally."

Moving the 240-foot-tall stadium also appeals to riverfront advocates, who feared the stadium would block access to a commodity they have spent more than a decade trying to recapture.

Rowland, burned by boasts of definitiveness during the Patriots imbroglio, took pains Thursday to say the latest version of the project will change many more times before any ribbons are cut.

"Changes," Rowland said, tongue in cheek, from now on will be called "improvements."

Sources say a retooled Adriaen's Landing - or "Twain's Landing" as some are pushing to call it - would still have some kind of sports venue connected to the convention center. That most likely means an arena that would replace the Hartford Civic Center.

Moving the stadium to Rentschler Field means it can be open for UConn football in time for the 2003 season, Rowland said, and also removes deadline pressure for Adriaen's Landing.

"The price was right," Rowland said, noting that the offer from UTC was unsolicited and occurred during a meeting on another topic.

Some time pressure remains. Rowland is expected to present a plan of development to the legislature in March, after which lawmakers will decide whether to release \$455 million in state funding for the convention center and stadium.

The money cannot be freed until at least \$210 million in private investment is committed for the project - a number that legislative leaders said will not change. The project is expected to include retail components, housing and possibilities such as an expanded Wadsworth Atheneum and ESPN Zone theme restaurant.

Building a sports venue at Adriaen's would mean a diminished role, or no role, for the Civic Center arena.

That raises a serious dilemma for the city's redevelopment effort: Moving the basketball/hockey arena from Trumbull Street to Adriaen's Landing might bring vitality to the riverfront at the expense of a section of downtown that seems to work well right now.

"It sounds like we're duplicating something we already have," said Hartford city council Minority Leader John B. O'Connell.

Whether a riverfront development would threaten the existing entertainment district around the Civic Center depends on which of the two areas would most benefit from the average of 250 events a year a coliseum brings to the city.

"When we are going through the planning process, we've got to make sure that this is the anchor," said Adriaen's Landing developer Len Wolman, of The Waterford Group.

Clearly, some decisions have to be made soon.

"The worst thing for us would be uncertainty," said Lawrence R. Gottesdiener, the developer charged with redeveloping the failing Civic Center mall, which is attached to the Civic Center coliseum. Northland is proposing a \$150 million complex of upscale apartments in two high-rises, and stores.

"We either need a vibrant coliseum or a demolished coliseum," Gottesdiener said.

Rowland stressed that the proposal for a new indoor arena - to house UConn basketball, minor-league hockey and other events now at the Civic Center - was one of many ideas being considered.

Nonetheless, he said, "There are some people saying the Civic Center is obsolete. It may be obsolete whether we do the arena at Adriaen's Landing or not."

HOME: [News](#) · [Sports](#) · [Business](#) · [Entertainment](#) · [Voices](#) · [Five Home](#) · [Classifieds](#) · [Destinations](#) · [The Shops](#) · ?

©1999 The Hartford Courant